

# Robbins Library turns 125

**The event was commemorated with a plaque honoring the Robbins family**

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**Library Director Andrea Nicolay (left) and local historian Richard Duffy (right) spoke at the birthday celebration for the Robbins Library on Nov. 16, 2017. (WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO/ABBI MATHESON)**

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the Robbins Library in Arlington Center. A birthday celebration was held in the Reading Room of the library, complete with cake, birthday crowns and historic tales.

Richard Duffy, the unofficial town historian, spoke about how the Robbins Library came to be the building we see today. Before the Robbins was built, the old public library was open for five hours during the week. Every Saturday between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. patrons were able to exchange their books for new ones.

"Robbins Library, which was then called the Arlington Public Library, was in what had been formerly a billiards hall and range shooting gallery on the third floor of a commercial building no longer standing here in Arlington Center," said Duffy.

Eli and Maria Robbins donated land and money to build the current Robbins Library.

"When this building went up it was as if a palace had been dropped into the midst of Arlington," said Duffy.

After both of the Robbins sisters died, much of their estate was given back to the library and the town to create additional services at the Robbins. Extended hours and an art gallery were created with these funds.

Two portraits hang in the lobby of the Robbins, one of Eli and one of Maria Robbins. At the 125th anniversary event, Library Director Andrea Nicolay dedicated a plaque to the Robbins, which will hang under their portraits, reminding everyone that the original 1892 building was made possible by the Robbins family.

The library continues to evolve in the legacy of the Robbins family. Currently, both the Robbins and the Fox library are undergoing a reimagining project, which seeks to renovate each building. Nicolay told the Advocate patrons can expect to see new styles of seating and additional study space.